

REMARKS

The Applicants request entry of this Preliminary Amendment, favorable consideration of this case, and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

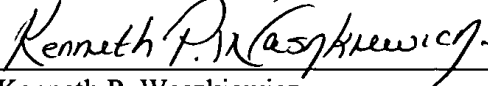
Status of the Claims

Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, the Applicants have rewritten claims 1–3, 6–9, 11–17, 20–23, and 25, and canceled claims 10 and 24. Thus, claims 1–9, 11–23, and 25 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 25 are independent claims.

AUTHORIZATION

The undersigned hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge all required fees, fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17, or all required extension of time fees for this paper to Deposit Account Number 13-4500, Order Number 1232-4675.

Respectfully submitted,
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